



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ESEA Flexibility Renewal Information for Stakeholders

March 1, 2015

ESEA Flexibility Renewal Overview

The 2015 ESEA Flexibility Renewal process will allow Connecticut to deepen its commitment to academic standards aligned to success in college and career, a multi-variable approach to educator evaluation and support, and a school accountability system that goes beyond standardized test scores.



ESEA Flexibility Renewal Overview

USED requires each waiver state to:

- Adopt and use high-quality, college- and career-ready standards and assessments;
- Create a strong system of school accountability that highlights achievement gaps and enables interventions in low-performing schools; and
- Implement educator evaluation and support systems.



ESEA Flexibility Renewal Overview

Timeline

- Connecticut's flexibility request was granted in June 2012.
- Flexibility renewal request is due by March 31, 2015.
- Period of renewal: 2015-16 through 2017-18.



ESEA Flexibility: Background

USED requires states to make commitments to three core principles to qualify for ESEA flexibility, and to engage in robust stakeholder outreach.

- Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students
- Principle 2: State-Developed Systems of Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support
- Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership



Principle 1: College- & Career-Ready Expectations for All Students

Principle 1 requires states to adopt college- and career-ready academic standards, as well as high-quality assessments aligned to these standards.



Principle 1: College- & Career-Ready Expectations for All Students

For Principle 1 Connecticut is required to:

1. Update its plan to describe how it will ensure all students graduate from high school ready for college and a career through the implementation of college- and career-ready standards and high-quality, aligned assessments.
2. Update its plan to describe how it will continue to support all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, low-achieving students, and economically disadvantaged students, and the teachers of those students.
3. Adopt English language proficiency (ELP) standards aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards, and will administer similarly aligned ELP assessments.
4. Administer alternate assessments aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
5. Report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each local education agency (LEA) and public high school.



Principle 1: College- & Career-Ready Expectations for All Students

Progress to date to implement Principle 1:

- Launched a resource website ctcorestandards.org
- Provided communication toolkits, and parent materials translated into the top seven languages spoken by Connecticut students.
- The Governor's Common Core State Standards Taskforce
- Standards Implementation:
 - Hundreds of teacher mini-grants up to \$2,000 each;
 - Since November 2013, 360+ educator workshops for over 10,000 attendees;
 - 1,200 days of customized, in-district coaching and technical assistance; teacher access to the Smarter Balanced Digital Library of resources;
 - \$34 million in technology upgrades for local education agencies; and
 - 10,000 copies of an instructional guide for school and district leaders.



Principle 1: College- & Career-Ready Expectations for All Students

Progress to date to implement Principle 1 (cont.):

- Provided dozens of workshops on the Smarter Balanced Assessment System.
- Successfully implemented the Smarter Balanced Field Test to 90% of Connecticut school districts.
- First operational administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessment for students in Grades 3-8 and 11 is ready to occur in spring 2015.
- In response to stakeholder feedback, CSDE assembled the High School Assessment Working Group to explore options for an alternate assessment in lieu of the Grade 11 Smarter Balanced test.



Principle 1: College- & Career-Ready Expectations for All Students

The CSDE plans to propose the following in its 2015 Flexibility Renewal Request (P1):

1. Continue with the Connecticut Core Standards, new standards in other academic areas, and the Smarter Balanced Assessments.
2. Propose adoption of new English language proficiency (ELP) standards aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards, and administer similarly aligned ELP assessments.
3. Connecticut will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each local education agency (LEA) and public high school.
4. Pending the recommendation of the High School Assessment Working Group, the CSDE will potentially seek flexibility to utilize an alternate assessment in lieu of the Grade 11 Smarter Balanced test.



Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

Principle 2 requires states to develop and maintain a process for data-driven continuous improvement of systems of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support for schools and districts.

Please note: In this presentation Principle 2 is divided into two sections: Accountability and Turnaround.



Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

Progress to date for Principle 2 – Connecticut's accountability system for schools and districts:

- Implemented a post-AYP accountability system starting in 2012-13;
 - Identified low-performing districts and schools to enable interventions and supports, including the Commissioner's Network;
 - Classified all schools and issued new performance reports, along with a companion document for parents to assist in understanding the new reports;
 - Created and implemented a plan to align data reporting with accountability; and
- Consulted extensively with stakeholders and analyzed the effectiveness of the new system.



State Board of Education Vision:

Connecticut students will think critically, learn joyfully, express themselves creatively, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Connecticut schools will prepare every learner for success and fulfillment in college, careers, and life.

Three ambitious goals designed to realize the vision.

Improve overall academic achievement and reduce academic achievement gaps

- Academic Achievement (Status)
 - All Students Subject Index
 - High Needs Subject Index
- Academic Growth (Longitudinal)
 - All Students
 - High Needs Subgroup

Produce college- and career-ready graduates

- Attendance/Chronic Absence
 - All Students
 - High Needs Subgroup
- Preparation for Postsecondary and Career Readiness
 - Coursework
 - Exams
- Graduation
 - On Track in 9th grade
 - All Students Four-year Rate
 - High Needs Six-Year Rate
- Postsecondary Success
 - Entrance

Prepare well-rounded, civically engaged students

- Civics - TBD
- Arts
 - Course Access
- Physical Fitness
 - Fitness Assessment
- Grit/Persistence/Personal Development - TBD



Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

The CSDE plans to propose the following changes to Connecticut's school and district accountability system.

- Include academic growth of the same students over time.
- Refine existing metrics to better reflect overall performance and make subgroup performance metrics more impactful and actionable.
- Add indicators for college- and career-readiness.
- Incorporate indicators focused on the delivery of a well-rounded education such as civics, arts and fitness.
- Adjust the classification methodology to better represent overall school performance and to better target interventions and support.



Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

The CSDE will propose the following points for indicators in the system:

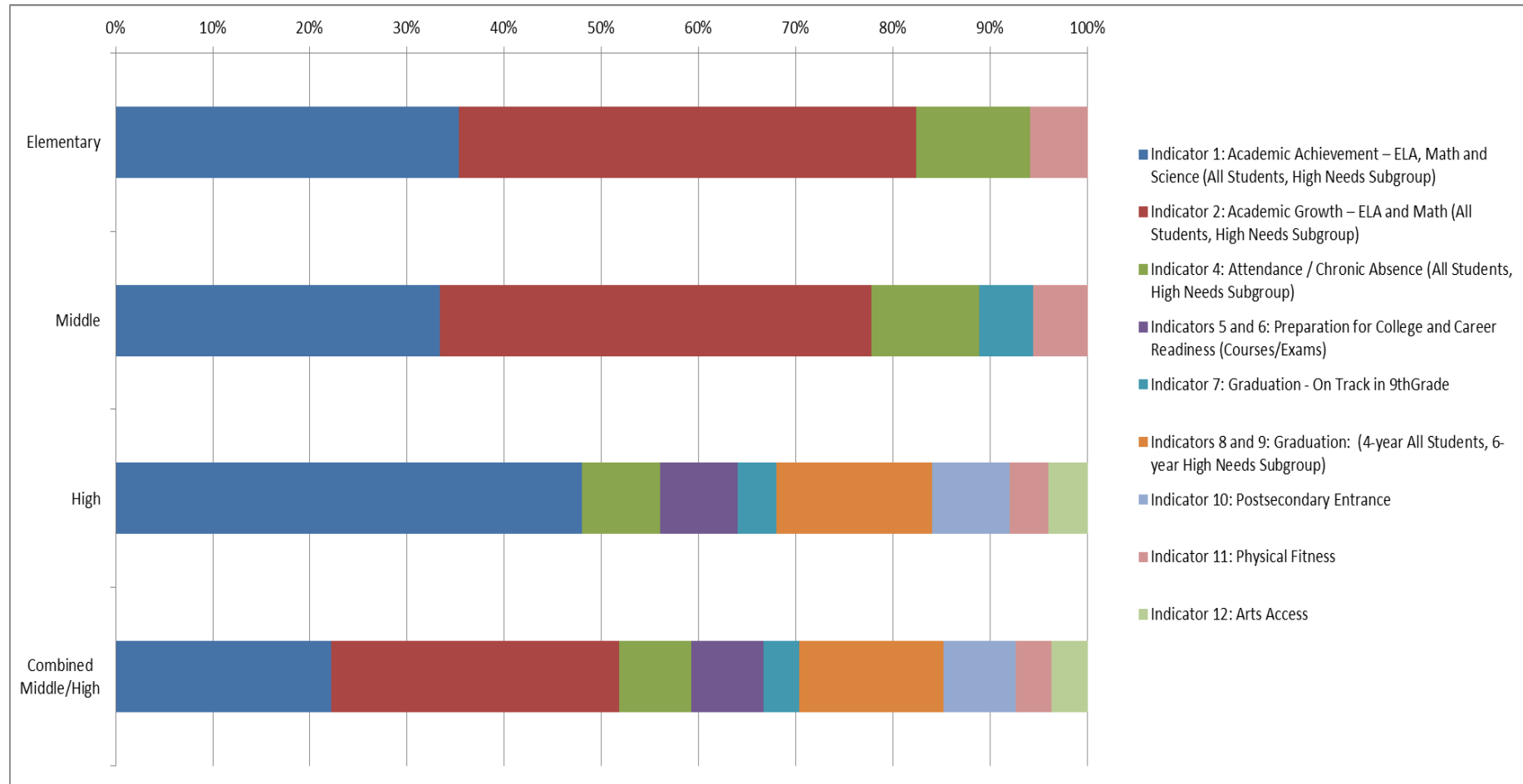
	Elementary	Middle	High	Middle/ High
Indicator 1: Academic Achievement – ELA, Math and Science (All Students, High Needs Subgroup)	300	300	600	300
Indicator 2: Academic Growth – ELA and Math (All Students, High Needs Subgroup)	400	400	<i>n/a</i>	400
Indicator 4: Attendance / Chronic Absence (All Students, High Needs Subgroup)	100	100	100	100
Indicators 5 and 6: Preparation for College and Career Readiness (Courses/Exams)	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	100	100
Indicator 7: Graduation - On Track in 9 th Grade	<i>n/a</i>	50	50	50
Indicators 8 and 9: Graduation: (4-year All Students, 6-year High Needs Subgroup)	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	200	200
Indicator 10: Postsecondary Entrance	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	100	100
Indicator 11: Physical Fitness	50	50	50	50
Indicator 12: Arts Access	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	50	50
Total Possible Points	850	900	1250	1350

Note: Indicator 3 is the participation rate.



Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

The points in the accountability system are expressed as percentages:



Proposed School Classification Approach

Category 1
(Top Quartile)

Category 2
(Two
Middle
Quartiles)

Category 3
(Bottom Quartile – except 4 and 5)

Category 4 (New Turnaround/Focus)

Category 5 (Existing Turnaround/Focus)

Overview

- Five categories per state law.
- **Turnaround School:** Overall low performing. Bottom 5% based on percentage of eligible points earned. Includes SIG Tiers I and II as well as high schools with 6-yr graduation rate that is less than 70% for all students in two recent cohorts.
- **Focus School:** Has the lowest academic achievement or graduation rate for the High Needs subgroup statewide. Selected from bottom 3 quartiles. Includes schools with lowest High Needs subgroup index scores as well as high schools with 6-yr graduation rate for the High Needs subgroup that is less than 70% in two recent cohorts.

During 2015-16

- **Category 1** – Top quartile – not in category 4 or 5; also if outlier in achievement or grad rate gap, then classified as 2
- **Category 2** – Two middle quartiles; not in category 4 or 5
- **Category 3** – Bottom quartile; not in category 4 or 5
- **Category 4** – Newly identified Turnaround and Focus Schools
- **Category 5** – Previously identified Turnaround and Focus Schools that haven't exited.

Beyond 2015-16

- Use multiple years weighted data to update categories 1, 2, 3

Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

For Principle 2 (Accountability) Connecticut is required to:

- Demonstrate continuous improvement (CI) of the recognition and accountability system, and ensure that the system incorporates student achievement, graduation rates, and school performance and progress over time, for all students and subgroups.
- Not assign schools the highest rating if significant graduation or achievement gaps exist across subgroups.
- Provide updated lists of Turnaround and Focus schools and provide a timeline for interventions in these schools.
- Consider if there have been any significant changes to the state's accountability system and ensure the description accurately reflects how the state plans to make annual accountability determinations.



Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

For Principle 2 (Turnaround) Connecticut is required to:

- Describe the process for identifying any schools that, after 3 years of interventions, have not made sufficient progress to exit priority or focus status;
- Describe how CSDE will ensure increased rigor of interventions and supports in these (non-exiting) schools by the start of the 2015-16 school year;
- Update its plan for providing incentives and supports to other Title I schools to include a rigorous process for ensuring that districts provide interventions and supports to low-achieving students; and
- Describe the statewide strategy to support and monitor districts' implementation of the system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support, including the process for holding districts accountable for improving school and student achievement.



Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

Progress to date for Principle 2, Turnaround:

- CSDE created the Alliance District program for the 30 lowest-performing districts in the state. These districts have received an additional \$250M in grant funding over the past three years.
- CSDE launched the Commissioner's Network as a statewide network of low-performing schools collaboratively pursuing evidence-based strategies to dramatically improve student achievement. 16 schools currently participate in the Network and have received upwards of \$26M in grant funding over the past 3 years.
- In 2014, CSDE launched new and competitive school-level grants. Between SIG 1003(g), SIG 1003(a), and the high school redesign competition, the CSDE awarded over \$11M to 29 schools in 10 districts.



Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

Progress to date for Principle 2, Turnaround (cont.):

- CSDE streamlined, shortened, and aligned all school and district application and monitoring processes using a consistent framework for school and district improvement.
- CSDE Turnaround Office staff conduct quarterly monitoring meetings with school and district teams, and adopted an online reporting platform.
- Teachers and administrators in Alliance Districts receive preferential admission to all professional development activities provided by the CSDE Academic and Talent Offices.
- To support district efforts to attract, retain and develop leadership, the CSDE in collaboration with the Connecticut Center for School Change and its partners (UConn, CAS CAPSS, CABE, New Leaders) developed LEAD Connecticut.



Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

Category 1-5: Requirements for Planning and Continuous School Improvement

Category:	Degree of Intervention and Planning and Submission Requirements
Category 1	Locally-determined process to support continuous improvement. No state stipulations or submission requirements. CSDE school improvement plan (SIP) and needs analysis templates provided as guidance.
Category 2	Locally-determined process to support continuous improvement. No state stipulations or submission requirements. State SIP and needs analysis templates provided as guidance.
Category 3	SIP and needs analysis must be developed and maintained locally, using CSDE-provided templates. Districts may seek a waiver to use locally-developed templates. CSDE will not collect Category 3 SIPs; however, LEAs must maintain SIPs on file and may be subject to random state audit. Alliance Districts must identify Category 3-5 school improvement strategies in annual Alliance applications.
Category 4	SIPs must be submitted to the state every two years; annual updates may be required, depending on school data. Districts may seek a waiver to use a locally-developed SIP template. The needs analysis process may be conducted locally or organized by the CSDE, as determined by the CSDE. SIPs must be submitted to the CSDE for review.
Category 5	SIPs must be submitted to the state every year for review. The needs analysis process may be conducted locally or organized by the CSDE, as determined by the CSDE. SIPs must be submitted to the CSDE for review.



Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

Category 4 and 5 Transformation Overview

Category 4 and 5 schools must develop a SIP, subject to CSDE review, identifying (a) a model for improvement; (b) strategies aligned to school needs; and (c) adequate financial resources to implement strategies and interventions.



Model: The overarching approach (pedagogical and structural) identified to transform school performance and advance student achievement.



Strategies: The actionable programs, interventions, and strategies the school will pursue in the areas of talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations to accelerate measurable improvement of teaching and learning.



Resources: The financial resources (e.g., local, state, and federal) available to support and sustain school improvement efforts.



Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

Category 4 and 5 Transformation Models

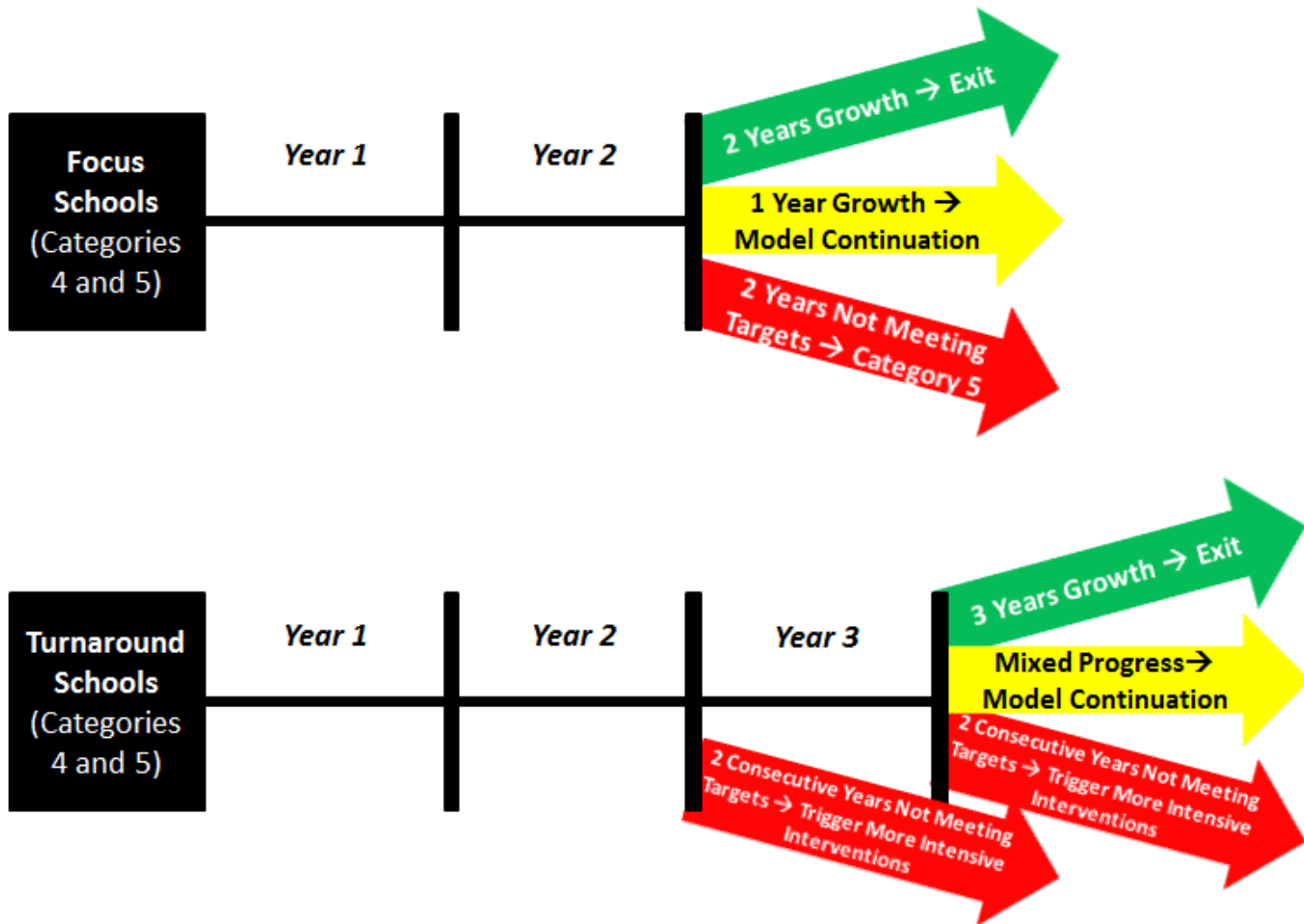
Category 4 and 5 schools must show annual progress relative to the new accountability system. State and local authorities must take collective responsibility for Turnaround schools that fail to meet local and state targets for two consecutive years by following one of the triggered pathways prescribed below.

Category 4 and 5 LEA Choice Models:	All LEA Models, Plus:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ District-led improvement plan❑ School Improvement Grant 1003(g)❑ Commissioner's Network❑ Innovation school❑ CommPACT school❑ School reorganization model❑ Community school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Reconstitution or restructuring based on a CT State Board of Education-approved plan❑ Commissioner's Network



Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

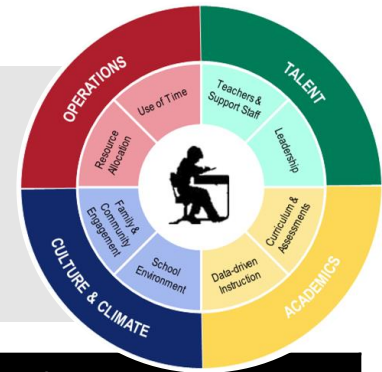
Category 4 and 5 Transformation Timelines



Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

Category 4 and 5 Transformation Strategies Menu

Regardless of model, schools must identify strategies to advance talent, academics, climate, and operations aligned to U. S. Department of Education's requirements. The CSDE will provide a research-based menu of interventions (elective for Focus schools and more prescriptive for Turnaround schools).



CSDE Performance Framework:

Talent: Employ systems and strategies to recruit, hire, develop, evaluate, and retain excellent school leaders, teachers, and support staff.

Academics: Design and implement a rigorous, aligned, and engaging academic program that allows all students to achieve at high levels.

Culture and Climate: Foster a positive learning environment that supports high-quality teaching and learning and engages families and the community as partners in the educational process.

Operations: Create systems and processes that promote organizational efficiency and effectiveness, including through the use of time and financial resources.

USED Turnaround Principles:

1. Strong leadership
2. Effective teachers

3. Rigorous and aligned instructional program
4. Use of data for continuous improvement

5. Safe and healthy students
6. Family and community engagement

7. Redesigned schedules for additional instructional time

Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

Category 4 and 5 School System of Support and Accountability

Support/Accountability System:	Description:
Alliance District Convenings and NetStat Sessions	Quarterly sessions designed to engage school and district teams in meaningful best practice sharing, professional development, and quantitative analyses of leading and lagging indicators of turnaround.
Quarterly Monitoring	Quarterly data submission process, following by in-person progress check-ins to discuss successes and challenges rooted in (1) data, (2) plan implementation, and (3) year-to-date grant spending. Process to support continuous improvement.
Essential School Systems	Planning templates aligned to the Essential School Systems framework (e.g., PD calendar, behavior plan, assessment system), and supporting tools and exemplars.
School and Classroom Walkthroughs	Informal school site visits and classroom observations used to gauge improvements in school climate and teaching and learning.
LEAD Connecticut	Intensive 2-month spring fellowship for new turnaround leaders; ongoing community of practice and job-embedded leadership coaching throughout the school year.



Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction & Leadership

Under Principle 3, states have committed to implementing new teacher and principal evaluation and support systems based on multiple measures. These include student growth as a significant factor and other measures of professional practice based on rigorous performance standards that meaningfully differentiate performance and evaluate educators on an annual basis.



Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction & Leadership

Educator evaluation and support systems should support continuous improvement in educator practice and instruction and include:

- Multiple measures of teacher and leader performance;
- Methods to meaningfully differentiate performance; and
- Methods that provide actionable information and feedback to inform professional learning and other support to educators.



Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction & Leadership

For Principle 3, Connecticut is required to:

- ☐ Assure that the state is on track for full implementation of teacher and principal evaluation and support systems,
or
- ☒ **Request modifications** to the evaluation and support system OR implementation timelines that require additional flexibility beyond the original waiver flexibility (and subsequent updates from USED).

CT plans to request modifications and therefore must provide a narrative response that addresses:

- (a) progress made to ensure that each LEA is on track to implement a high quality evaluation and support system;
- (b) proposed changes, with rationale for each change; and
- (c) steps the CSDE will take to ensure continuous improvement of evaluation and support systems that result in instructional improvement and increased student learning.



Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction & Leadership

Progress to date to implement Principle 3:

In collaboration with the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) and with approval from the State Board of Education (SBE), the CSDE developed and implemented Connecticut's Educator Evaluation and Support system and the state model, the System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED) as follows:

- 2012-13: Pilot implementation of CT's state model, SEED, in ten districts and consortia of districts;
- 2013-14: Partial implementation in all CT LEAs and charter schools; and
- 2014-15: Full implementation in all LEAS and charter schools. *

*In May 2014, PEAC recommended and the SBE approved a one year waiver to allow for time to work with stakeholders and study the implementation challenges in the following unique educational entities: Adult Ed, Pre-K, Private Approved Special Education Facilities, Unified School District #1, and Unified School District #2. Additionally, flexibility was approved to allow additional time to implement with charter school and central office administrators.



Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction & Leadership

Progress to date to implement Principle 3:

In collaboration with PEAC, and with approval by the SBE, the CSDE has continuously refined CT's Educator Evaluation and Support system and the state model (SEED). Among those refinements were:

- The request to allow LEAs and charter schools the flexibility to “decouple” the required use of state test data to measure student growth in educator evaluation for educators in tested grades and subjects through the 2014-15 school year;
- Adjustments to the number of student growth goals required; and
- Additional flexibility regarding the number of required annual observations.



Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction & Leadership

Progress to date to implement Principle 3:

The CSDE engaged a broadly representative group of stakeholders to collaborate on the development of a new system for professional learning to support educators across their career continuum. The following represent some of the accomplishments to date:

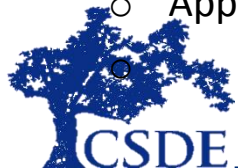
- Convened the CT Academy for Professional Learning;
- Convened the Professional Learning Advisory Council (PLAC); and
- In collaboration with the PLAC, the CSDE has:
 - developed a new definition of professional learning consistent with the vision outlined in PA 12-116;
 - reached consensus on CT Standards for Professional Learning; and
 - Developed a DRAFT of the *Connecticut Guidance for a Professional Learning System*



Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction & Leadership

The CSDE plans to propose the following relating to Principle 3:

- Continued flexibility, through at least the 2015-16 school year, regarding the requirement to incorporate the state test as a measure of student growth in educator evaluation for teachers and administrators in tested grades and subjects; and
- Adding additional one-year waiver for full implementation of CT's Educator Evaluation and Support system in the following unique settings:
 - Pre-K;
 - Adult Education;
 - Unified School District #1;
 - Unified School District #2; and
 - Approved Private Special Education Facilities.



PLEASE NOTE: CSDE will require that each of these systems implement a pilot in 2015-16.

Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction & Leadership

The CSDE plans to propose the following relating to Principle 3 (cont.):

- Require full implementation of CT's Educator Evaluation and Support system as outlined in the CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation (June 2012) for charter schools and central office administrators in all LEAs beginning in the 2015-16 school year;
- Continue to develop and update the resources provided to support educators of students with disabilities, English learners, and educators of non-tested grades and subjects; and
- Continue to advance the work to transform CT's systems for professional learning and develop new tools and resources to assist schools and districts.



Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction & Leadership

As required under Principle 3, the CSDE will implement a statewide system to monitor implementation of CT's Educator Evaluation and Support system as follows:

- Annual monitoring through a three–tiered approach
 - Level 1: All LEAs and charter schools will submit a progress questionnaire as part of the annual submission of their educator evaluation and support plan
 - Level 2: A survey of educators from a sampling of CT LEAs and charter schools (representing both Alliance and Non-Alliance districts)
 - Level 3: On-site visit for up to ten districts annually based on the findings from Level 2
- Implementation Timeline:
 - 2015-16 Plan Submission: LEAs and charter schools will be **strongly encouraged** but not required to participate
 - 2016-17 Plan Submission: All LEAs and charter schools **will be required** to participate as outlined above.



The Importance of ESEA Flexibility Renewal

Failure to renew Connecticut's waiver would result in:

- A return to a limited and unhelpful system for measuring school and district performance;
- The return of restrictions on how federal funds are used; and
- Prescriptive consequences for failing schools.



The Importance of ESEA Flexibility Renewal

Stakeholder Feedback Requested

Thank you for taking the time to view this presentation regarding Connecticut's proposed 2015 ESEA Flexibility Renewal.

We would appreciate you e-mailing any feedback you would like to share to eseaflexrequest.sde@ct.gov.

